

Wanderers go on their losing way at Tooting

Sports Mail Special Report

TOOTING & MITCHAM 3 : WYCOMBE W. 2

HAVING made one of their worst-ever Isthmian League starts—with three defeats in five games—Wycombe Wanderers visited champions Tooting and Mitcham this afternoon with the team which lost to Oxford City in the week.

Tooting and Mitcham: Pearson; Harlow, Edwards; Slade, Bennett, Murphy; Roberts, Viney, Clay, Hasty, Flanagan.

Wycombe: Brown; Beck, Bartholomew; Thomas, Fisher, Weaver; Worley, Rockell, Bates, Trott, Tomlin.

Referee: Mr. D. E. Maitland.

Wycombe met the early Tooting onslaught with great spirit but when Thomas lost a clash of youth with centre forward Clay, Viney streaked away to shoot straight at Brown.

When Clay broke clear again, Brown just beat the lunging Hasty to the ball in the goal-mouth.

SOUND DEFENCE

The brilliant Tooting individualists were certainly not having it all their own way. Fisher and Beck were very sound in a defence which kept the home attack at long range.

When Wycombe's forwards impressed with some neat approach work, Bates was unlucky to deflect a Tomlin centre wide of goal.

It was the Tooting defence which looked suspect.

Bates picked up a pass in his own half, ran on and deceived Bennett before feeding Trott with a through pass.

Unfortunately for Wanderers, goalkeeper Pearson sprinted out to snatch the ball off Rockell's feet.

Although Trott appeared to be limping badly, the much-improved Wycombe attack was playing magnificently. Pell-mell Rockell chasing a silly back-pass got in two fiercely angled drives, which were scrambled clear.

Then Tomlin sent in another cracking drive which Pearson had to dive to save at the foot of a post.

Stung by the taunts of their own fans, Tooting attacked with speed towards the interval and Fisher once headed behind for a corner.

Brown made a brilliant backward dive to tip Viney's shot over before VINEY scored, from Clay's pass, three minutes before the interval.

Half-time: Tooting 1, Wycombe 0.

A thigh injury Cliff Trott received earlier in the game severely handicapped the Wycombe attack.

Clay dribbled past Fisher and Beck on the left wing and centred accurately for FLANAGAN to dive and head a 55th minute goal.

WYCOMBE UNLUCKY

The absence of a direct spear-head forward was Wycombe's biggest worry. Clever midfield play broke down consistently near the penalty area.

In the 75th minute with Wanderers' defenders appealing vainly for offside, ROBERTS flicked the ball into the net.

Beating Bennett beautifully on the turn, BATES scored a fine goal four minutes later to spark off the spirited Wycombe reply. With a minute to go BATES scored Wycombe's second goal.

This was a game Tooting were very lucky to win.

RESULT:

TOOTING 3
WYCOMBE 2

WYCOMBE FAIL IN LATE BID

Tooting 3 Wycombe 2

A COURAGEOUS fight-back after being three goals down nearly saved a point for Wycombe at Sandy-lane.

Just 15 minutes from the end centre-forward Paul Bates tricked a tiring defence and crashed a great shot past Tooting's goalkeeper Wally Pearson.

And, with a minute left, it was again Bates who showed the way to goal when he headed home an excellent cross from right-winger Jack Tomlin.

Seconds earlier John Bartholomew, who had moved into the forward line from left back, muffed a golden opportunity with only Pearson to beat.

But most of the honours went to Tooting. They owed their victory to 18-year-old defence-chasing centre-forward Mike Clay, who sent Wycombe reeling three minutes before half-time with a 15-yard shot which goalkeeper Ken Brown never saw.

The second half was 14 minutes old when outside-left Denzil Flanagan dived full length to head a Clay centre just inside a post to put Tooting two goals ahead.

Midway through the half Welsh winger Dave Roberts found the net again and the game seemed in the bag for Tooting.

Then Wanderers, who have only three points from their six games this season, hit back with those two Bates goals.